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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII)

Written statement*/ submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[29 June 2001]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received in English, from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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1. The gross and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Tibetan people committed by the Chinese authorities continue to be documented. Human rights abuses, indeed, are increasing in number and severity since the adoption of resolution 1991/10 by the Sub-Commission. Individually, these human rights violations warrant the Sub-Commission's concern. Collectively, the pattern is so pervasive and persistent as to demand immediate condemnation and action.

2. That pattern of human rights abuses, and the sources of that pattern, were recognized in the International Commission of Jurists' 1997 report on Tibet, in which it concluded that Tibet is under "alien subjugation" and called for a referendum by Tibetans to determine how they wish to be governed. Indeed, allowing Tibetans to exercise their right of self-determination appears to be the only way to end the persistent human rights abuses in Tibet. On 10 March, this year, His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Speech to commemorate the 42nd Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day of 10 March, 1959 stated: "If the Tibetans are truly happy the Chinese authorities should have no difficulty in holding a plebiscite in Tibet. Already some Tibetan non-governmental organizations are advocating a referendum in Tibet. They argue that the best way to resolve this issue once and for all is to allow the Tibetans inside Tibet to choose their own destiny through a freely held referendum. They demand to let the Tibetan people speak out and decide for themselves. I have always maintained that ultimately the Tibetan people must be able to decide the future of Tibet. I would in fact whole-heartedly support the result of such a referendum."

3. For more than 20 years, the Tibetan government in exile under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been pursuing a policy of dialogue with China to resolve the Tibetan problem. In the spirit of reconciliation and compromise, numerous proposals were outlined by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. However, the Chinese leadership continues to oppose negotiations without preconditions although the Dalai Lama has said on record that he is not seeking the independence of Tibet. China has instead initiated a ruthless campaign in Tibet to further deny the Tibetan people of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. During a recent visit to Lithuania, the Dalai Lama said Lithuanians could help by raising the subject of Tibet's autonomy. "We are not seeking independence but autonomy and mutual understanding beneficial and acceptable to both sides," he told journalists. "When you meet Chinese intellectuals, businessmen or government representatives always remind them that we do not want to ruin their priorities of attaining unity and stability. This is our aim as well but it has to come from within, not through force or at gunpoint," the Dalai Lama added.

4. The Chinese Government continues to attempt to undermine the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. It still refuses to allow visitors to confirm the well-being of the eleventh Panchen Lama of Tibet, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. Human rights groups and Governments report that scores of monks and nuns have been detained or expelled from their monasteries and nunneries for objecting to an ongoing "re-education campaign" or for refusing to denounce the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy based in India recorded 862 monastic expulsions, including 147 nuns, in the year 2000 as a direct consequences of the "patriotic re-education" campaign. With this, the overall number of monks and nuns who have been expelled under the impact of the campaign is now 12,271 according to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

5. In June, 2001 reports emerged from Tibet of the increased official Chinese monitoring of the growing clergy population of Serthar Buddhist Institute located in the so-called "Karze Autonomous Tibetan Prefecture" of Sichuan province. In the spring of this year, officials from 13 different districts of Kanze, Dartsedo, Derge, Nyarong, Sershul and Serthar (Serta)

districts of Kham came to Serthar Buddhist Institute or the Larung Ngarig Nangten Institute. The officials received direct instructions from both the Chinese government in Beijing and the provincial government in Chengdu that the Institute's massive clergy population of more than10,000 must be reduced to 1,500. The authorities said the excluded members of clergy must be returned to their respective districts or countries and the vacated monastic rooms demolished. The clergy population of Serthar Buddhist Institute cuts across nationalities. There are about 1,000 Chinese monks from China along with students from Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, including 4,000 nuns who live and study at a nunnery, affiliated to the institute. The bulk of the population of Serthar Buddhist Institute were Tibetans.

6. In June 2000, 18 houses of Tibetan members of the Lhasa-based Tibetan Opera Association were raided to confiscate religious artifacts, altars, and statues which indicates that Beijing views Tibetan nationalism as being intrinsically linked to its religious and cultural identity. Strict orders were also issued in Tibet against celebration of traditional Tibetan festivals, including the birthday celebration of the Dalai Lama. The Chinese authorities have now intensified their policy of transforming Tibet into an atheist region to propagate the so-called communist "spiritual civilization".

7. In other development, in April this year, it was known that a five-metre bronze and gold statue of Maitriya, the future Buddha, that showcases the tomb of the 7th Dalai Lama, is being shipped to Shanghai from Lhasa, the Tibetan capital. The discovery together with the news that statues and artifacts from another shrine in the Potala Palace are being readied to be shipped as soon as possible to Shanghai is causing deep pain and anxiety to the people of Tibet. Tsering Dorje Gashi, the author of *New Tibet - Memoirs of a Graduate of the Peking Institute of National Minorities,* published in 1980, states in his book, "Priceless works of art, literature, and religious relics and works that were of model of Tibetan artistic perfection and achievement were taken out of the Potala and other monasteries... Idols and images made of gold, silver, brass and precious stones and metal were taken to China and eventually they found their way in the market of Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo where antique-collectors from the West bought them for exorbitant prices. A rough estimate of the foreign exchange earned by China from the sale of Tibetan religious and art objects is more than 80 billion American dollars."

8. Although China ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, State-sponsored violence against Tibetan women is common. Article 16 of the Convention gives women the right to decide on the number and spacing of their children and prohibits compulsory sterilization or abortion. In practice, restrictive birth control policies are carried out in Tibet through coercion and force. During the year 2000, the Chinese authorities made contradictory statements regarding the population growth conepts for the "backward western parts of the country" which includes Tibet. Officially admitting various adverse effects in the western regions due to the rising population growth, measures of control have been strictly targeted at repressive birth control policies on Tibetans. These indicated an increase in the application and enforcement of illegal birth control policies on "ethnic minorities" who had previously been "exempt", with a flagrant, proclaimed disregard for existing laws. In the context of China's simultaneous transfer of millions of Chinese settlers into Tibet, this conduct raises serious questions concerning possible violations of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

9. Beijing hardened its policy towards "splittist" activities and repression was intensified all over Tibet to eliminate political dissents. The current intensification of political repression is an outcome of Chinese authorities policies that are clearly reflected in the official

statements of their leaders. During the seventh Chinese People's Consultative Conference, on 22 May, 2000, Lechog, the chairman of the so-called "Tibet Autonomous Region" said: "...government staff should advise local people and their subordinates to oppose splittism and cut ties with the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama issue should be studied and any underground organisation activating in Tibet should be filtered and gotten rid of."

10. In conclusion, we call upon the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to recognize the persistent pattern of human rights abuses against the Tibetan people. The pattern points to a threat of destruction of the Tibetans as a people unless they are allowed to exercise their right to self-determination. We therefore call upon the Sub-Commission to conduct a study on the current situation of peoples living under foreign occupation and colonialism.